

substitute specification does not introduce impermissible new matter into the disclosure.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-19 as follows:

1. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system configured to enable use and redemption of issued electronic coupons that are in electronic or printed form, the electronic coupon issuing system comprising:

an electronic coupon server having a database for storing a plurality of electronic coupons and for storing information regarding requests for acquisition of the electronic coupons including IDs of redemption media used for redemption of the electronic coupons, the redemption media being presented by consumers at the point of sale when the electronic coupons are redeemed, and search means for receiving the IDs of the redemption media and searching the server database for electronic coupons that are useable in connection with the IDs; and

an electronic coupon redemption terminal for receiving the redemption media at the point of purchase, inquiring with the electronic coupon search means of the electronic coupon server whether an electronic coupon exists for a given purchase, and approving the use of useable electronic coupons;

wherein the electronic coupon server receives a request for acquisition of an electronic coupon from an electronic coupon registration terminal and stores the ID of the redemption media in correlation with the electronic coupon; and

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the electronic coupon search means receives the ID of the redemption media and information regarding the intended use from the electronic coupon redemption terminal, performs a search to determine whether or not an electronic coupon useable for the ID of the redemption media and for the intended use exists, and sends results of the search to the electronic coupon redemption terminal.

2. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 1; wherein the electronic coupon server accumulates the search results of searches performed by the electronic coupon search means and accumulates electronic coupon usage information.

3. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 1; wherein the electronic coupon registration terminal is at least one of a mobile telephone, a computer connected to a network, or a digital broadcast reception terminal.

4. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 1; wherein the electronic coupons are at least one of coupons for discounts, benefits, or tickets.

5. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 1; wherein the electronic coupon redemption terminal prints out the electronic coupon.

6. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 5; wherein the electronic coupon redemption terminal prints out the electronic coupon as a bar code.

7. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 1; wherein the electronic coupon redemption media include at least one of credit cards, debit cards, point-accumulation cards, or mileage accumulation cards.

8. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 7; wherein the electronic coupon redemption media comprises credit cards, the electronic coupon redemption terminal serves as a credit card authorization terminal, and the electronic coupon redemption terminal is connected to the electronic coupon server via a credit card settlement center or via a relay center for relaying information to a credit card payment authorization center.

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9. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 8; wherein the electronic coupon redemption terminal simultaneously dispatches a search for the electronic coupon and a request for approval for a credit card purchase authorization, and when the electronic coupon is useable for a discount, the electronic coupon redemption terminal sends out a second request for a credit card purchase authorization at a discounted price indicated by the electronic coupon.

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10. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 8; wherein the electronic coupon redemption terminal and the credit card settlement center or the relay center which relays information to the credit card payment authorization center are connected wirelessly.

11. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method configured to enable redemption of electronic or printed coupons, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of coupons;

receiving a request for acquisition of an electronic coupon and storing electronic coupon acquisition information in association with ID information of an electronic coupon redemption medium to be used at the point of sale for redemption of the electronic coupon; and,

upon receipt of the electronic coupon redemption medium, performing a search of the stored electronic coupons to determine whether there exists an electronic coupon that is usable with the electronic coupon redemption medium, and approving use of the electronic coupon redemption medium when a usable electronic coupon exists.

12. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to claim 11; further comprising the step of accumulating electronic coupon usage information.

13. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method as claimed in claim 11; further comprising the step of requesting an electronic coupon by use of a mobile telephone or a computer which is connected to a network, or by a digital broadcast reception terminal.

14. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method as claimed in claim 11; wherein the electronic coupons are coupons for discounts, benefits or tickets.

15. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method as claimed in claim 11; further comprising the step of printing out the electronic coupon.

16. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to claim 15; wherein the electronic coupon is printed out as a bar code.

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17. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to claim 11; wherein the electronic coupon redemption medium is at least one of a credit card, a debit card, a point accumulation card, or a mileage accumulation card.

18. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to claim 17; wherein the electronic coupon redemption medium is a credit card; and further comprising the step of using a credit card authorization terminal for performing redemption of the electronic coupon.

19. (Amended) An electronic coupon issuing method according to claim 18; further comprising the step of performing credit card purchase authorization using the credit card authorization terminal, and the step of performing credit card authorization is performed at a discounted price when an electronic coupon for the discounted price is usable.

Kindly add the following new claims 20-28:

20. An electronic coupon issuing system for issuing coupons in electronic form, the coupons being redeemable at the point of purchase without the need to present a printed copy thereof, the system comprising:

an electronic coupon server having a memory for storing a database of available electronic coupons along with identifying indicia of redemption media to be used at the point of purchase to redeem coupons, and search means for receiving the identifying indicia of the redemption media and searching the database for electronic coupons that are useable in connection with the identifying indicia; and

an electronic coupon redemption device for receiving the redemption media and communicating with the search means of the electronic coupon server to determine whether an electronic coupon exists and has been associated with the identifying indicia of the redemption media;

wherein the electronic coupon server receives a request for acquisition of an electronic coupon from an electronic coupon registration terminal and stores the request along with the identifying indicia of the redemption media; and

wherein the search means receives the identifying indicia of the redemption media and information regarding the intended use from the reception terminal, performs a search to determine whether or not an electronic coupon useable for the identifying indicia and for the intended use exists, and sends the search results to the electronic coupon redemption device.

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21. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 20; wherein the electronic coupon server accumulates the results of searches performed by the search means and accumulates electronic coupon usage information.

22. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 20; wherein the electronic coupon registration terminal comprises one or more of a mobile telephone, a computer connected to a network, or a digital broadcast reception terminal.

23. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 20; wherein the electronic coupon redemption device prints out the electronic coupon.

24. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 23; wherein the electronic coupon redemption device prints out the electronic coupon as a bar code.

25. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 20; wherein the redemption media includes at least one of credit cards, debit cards, point-accumulation cards, and mileage accumulation cards.

26. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 25; wherein the redemption media comprises credit cards, the electronic coupon redemption device serves as a

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credit card purchase authorization terminal, and the electronic coupon redemption device is connected to the electronic coupon server via a credit card settlement center or via a relay center for relaying information to a credit card payment authorization center.

27. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 26; wherein the electronic coupon redemption terminal simultaneously dispatches a search for the electronic coupon and a request for approval for a credit card purchase, and when the electronic coupon is useable for a discount, the electronic coupon redemption terminal sends out a second request for a credit card purchase authorization at a discounted price indicated by the electronic coupon.

28. An electronic coupon issuing system according to claim 27; wherein the electronic coupon redemption terminal and the credit card settlement center or the relay center which relays information to the credit card payment authorization center are connected wirelessly.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Delete the abstract now of record and insert therefor the new abstract submitted herewith on a separate sheet.

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